Ford Motor Company Long Beach Assembly Plant,
Oil House
700 Henry Ford Avenue
Long Beach
Los Angeles County
California

HAER No. CA-82-B

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Western Regional Office
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
FORD MOTOR COMPANY LONG BEACH ASSEMBLY PLANT: OIL HOUSE

HAER No. CA-82-B

Location:	700 Henry Ford Avenue, Port of Long Beach, County of Los Angeles, California USGS Quandrangle: Long Beach, CA UTM Coordinates: 11.385290.337030
Date of Construction:	1929-1930
Architect:	Albert Kahn, Inc., Detroit MI
Contractors:	General Contractor: Clinton Construction Co. Brick Supplier: Gladding, McBean and Company
Present Owner:	Port of Long Beach P.O. Box 570 Long Beach, CA 90801
Present Use:	Demolished, October 1990 - January 1991
Significance:	Ford Motor Company built the Long Beach Assembly Plant during 1929-1930 as one of six contemporaneous assembly plants constructed in the United States. The overall purpose of these plants was to expand production of Ford's Model A, which replaced the Model T in 1927. Albert Kahn, the architect for the Long Beach Assembly Plant, also designed the other five Ford Assembly Plants. The Long Beach Assembly Plant was the only plant outside of Michigan to have a Pressed Steel Department as an integral part of the manufacturing and assembly process. Kahn's architectural design incorporated an enormous articulated structure that retained aesthetic qualities, yet permitted functional use of space. The Long Beach Assembly Plant operated until 1958 and typified the Ford Assembly Line concept. On a national scale the Long Beach Assembly Plant reflected a national trend of industrial growth, mass production of consumer goods, and the consumption of those goods.
Project Information:	The former Ford Motor Company Long Beach Assembly Plant was evaluated eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The Port of Long Beach sought to redevelop this property, ultimately resulting in plans to demolish and

remove all vestiges of this plant. The Port of Long Beach's application for a 404 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, invoked the Section 106 Process. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation mandated Historic American Engineering Recordation (HAER) documentation of the the Ford Motor Company Long Beach Assembly Plant. The Port of Long Beach retained Chambers Group, Inc. to document the plant.

Report Prepared by:

Authors and Historians:
J. Stephen Alexandrowicz, SOPA, Principal Investigator
Philip de Barros, Ph.D., Project Manager
Lois Roberts Ph.D., Historian
Allen Maben, Historian
Buddy Mear, Architectural Historian

Chambers Group, Inc.
1761-A East Garry Avenue
Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714)-261-5414

Photographers:
David De Vries
Hammon, Jensen, Wallen and Associates, Inc.
8497 Edgewater Drive
Oakland, CA 94621

Dietrich Floeter
Dietrich Floeter Photography
318 West Eleventh Street
Traverse City, MI 49684

Date: June 1991

PART I HISTORIC NARRATIVE

Ford Motor Company built the Long Beach Assembiy Plant during 1929-1930. A historical narratlve pertaining to the history of the Ford Motor Company Long Beach Assembly Plant ls presented in the documentation for the Assembiy Piant, HAER No. CA-82. The foiiowing discussion is focused on the Oil House.

The Oil House was depicted on the "Plot Plan" produced in 1927 by Albert Kahn, Inc., as one of the originai buiidings pianned for the site (CA-82-A-95). However, Albert Kahn, Inc. redrew the 1927 pians for the Oil House in November 1930, prior to its construction during that same year. The Oii House stored fuel oii for the boilers (which primariiy burned natural gas), as weii as fiammabie iiquids such as paints and thinners, that were used in the manufacturing and assembiy process. On January 27, 1956, the Long Beach Assembly Plant was flooded, consequently causing a fire that damaged the Oil House along with the rest of the plant, it was repaired and soon put back in service. The Oil House was demolished in the 1980s.

PART II ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

When the HAER documentation was undertaken at the Long Beach Assembly Plant, all that remained of the former oilhouse was ca. 2-foot high foundation walls composed of mortared yellow brick that supported the remnants of a poured concrete, first floor (CA-82-B-1 and CA-82-B-2).

Based on the original Plot Plan and revised drawings, as well as on-site observations, the Oil House was situated ca. 40 feet south of the warehouse portion of the assembly plant. Cerritos Channel is situated ca. 50 feet to the east and south of the Oilhouse. Dimensions for the structure were ca. 113 feet, 9 inches long, by 61 feet, 9 inches wide, by ca. 24 feet high. The long side of the structure was oriented along an east/west axis, parallel to the south wall of the Assembly Building. The structure's foundation was built upon pilings in the same manner as described for the main Assembly Building. Architectural drawings of the Oil House produced by Albert Kahn, Inc., between 1927-1930 indicate that the structure was a gable roofed, single story, building. Construction was facilitated with a poured, reinforced concrete foundation that supported a superstructure constructed from steel I-beams. The exterior of the structure was fabricated from mortared yellow brick in an American Bond. Entrances were placed in all four exterior walls. Fenestration consisted of steel and glass sash that extended from ca. 5 feet above ground level, 6 feet upward where the windows met with the poured concrete cornice. The steel and glass sash were placed between vertical brick columns that were symetrically spaced along the exterior walls of the structure. A cement cornice ran along all sides of the structure. The roof was sheathed in corrugated asbestos sheeting.

Within the structure, fuel oil was apparently stored on the first floor, while flammable liquids were stored in a subterranean room under the first floor. A total of 17 storage tanks were contained within the structure. Stored liquids were transferred to the main assembly building through pipes that ran through a sub-surface cement tunnel that connected the Oilhouse with the Warehouse portion of the main assembly building.

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

See Part III Sources of Information, Ford Motor Company Long Beach Assembly Plant, HAER No. CA-82, pages 64 through 100.